

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 020463
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

66011

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S/S:MR. SEBASTIAN

-----290125Z 101276 /62

O 290039Z JAN 77 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 020463

NODIS

FOR SEITZ-LONDON

FOL RPT GABORONE 0270 ACTION SECSTATE 28 JAN QUOTE

S E C R E T GABORONE 0270

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY AND SCHAUFLELE FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1 IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMIN

TAGS: PFOR, RH, BC, UK

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR RICHARD'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT KHAMA

REF: STATE 018231

1. AMBASSADOR IVOR RICHARD MET FOR NINETY MINUTES JAN. 27 WITH PRESIDENT KHAMA. MEETING CONSISTED PRINCIPALLY OF RICHARD'S REVIEW OF CURRENT SITUATION IN RHODESIA AND KHAMA'S REACTION'S. RICHARD GAVE ME THE HIGHLIGHTS MORNING JAN. 28, ALONG WITH HIS COMMENTS AND INTERPRETATIONS ON THE MEETING (IN PARENTHESES).

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2. RICHARD NOTED THAT DESPITE SOME APPREHENSION ABOUT LIKELY ATMOSPHERE IN THE WAKE OF UK ABSTENTION ON UNSC VOTE TWO WEEKS AGO (ON BOTSWANA'S COMPLAINT AGAINST RHODESIA), HE AND HIS PARTY FOUND KHAMA FRIENDLY BUT SOMBER AND DISTURBED RE RHODESIA. AMONG ADJECTIVES RICHARD AND PARTY USED TO DESCRIBE KHAMA'S MTOD WERE "CONCERNED, DISAPPOINTED, ANXIOUS AND FRIGHTENED", I.E., BY

THREAT OF "OUTSIDE INTERVENTION".

3. RICHARD SAID HE OPENED BY OUTLINING SITUATION RE RHODESIA, SUGGESTING THAT "IT HAD BEEN UNWISE FOR FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS TO RECOGNIZE POPULAR FRONT" AS REPRESENTING RHODESIAN NATIONALISTS. PRESIDENT KHAMA REPORTEDLY AGREED, BUT EXPLAINED THAT HE FELT HE "HAD TO GO ALONG". TWO FACTORS HE NOTED IN SUPPORT OF HIS ACTION WERE (A) THAT SINCE 1974 FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS HAD STUCK TOGETHER WITH A "RIFT", AN ACHIEVEMENT IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED "PRIDE", (B) MORE IMPORTANT, RECOGNITION OF THE POPULAR FRONT, WHICH REPRESENTED THE FIGHTING FORCES, SEEMED TO BE "THE ONLY MEANS OF ENDING THE WAR". KHAMA REMINDED RICHARD THAT IN "TWO OR THREE EARLIER MEETINGS" RICHARD HIMSELF HAD EMPHASIZED HOW ESSENTIAL IT WAS TO STOP THE WAR. "THIS IS WHAT WAS BEHIND RECOGNITION", KHAMA IS QUOTED AS SAYING.

4. RICHARD SAID HE ASKED KHAMA TO DO WHAT HE COULD TO "RESIST" EXTENDING RECOGNITION OF POPULAR FRONT AT THE FORTHCOMING LUSAKA MEETING OF THE OAU LIBERATION COMMITTEE. KHAMA REPLIED THAT "BOTSWANA'S POWER LIES IN ITS EXAMPLE", THAT THEY WOULD "DO WHAT THEY COULD -- WHICH WAS NOT A GREAT DEAL". KHAMA ADDED BOTSWANA HAD NOT EVEN PAID ITS DUES TO THE OAU LIBERATION COMMITTEE. (AT THIS POINT RICHARD CHARACTERIZED KHAMA'S ATTITUDE AS "UNHAPPY BUT RESIGNED" TO FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS' DECISION RE PF. IN A FURTHER ASIDE, RICHARD SAID HE FOUND IT IRONIC THAT THE THREE COUNTRIES BORDERING DIRECTLY ON RHODESIA, SPECIFICALLY INCLUDING MACHEL, WERE THE LEAST SATISFIED WITH THE RECOGNITION OF THE PR. RICHARD SAID HE WAS CONVINCED IT WAS NYERERE WHO HAD FORCED THE DECISION "BECAUSE HE DOESN'T LIKE THE BISHOP" (MUSOREWA).

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RICHARD ALSO COMMENTED THAT KHAMA'S ATTITUDE OF RESIGNATION APPARENTLY REFLECTED HIS STATE OF HEALTH, BUT HE "DID NOT HAVE MUCH FIGHT IN HIM".)

5. WHAT RICHARD TOOK AS FURTHER REFLECTION OF KHAMA'S WEAKENED (AND FRIGHTENED) CONDITION WAS EVIDENT IN KHAMA'S INQUIRY ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF UK INTRODUCING ARMED FORCES IN RHODESIA. RICHARD SAID HE DISMISSED THIS POSSIBILITY. KHAMA AT THIS POINT (AND AT LEAST ONCE LATER) REAFFIRMED THAT NO "FREEDOM FIGHTERS" HAD BEEN OPERATING FROM BOTSWANA TERRITORY.

6. EARLY ON IN THE MEETING, RICHARD SAID HE TOOK THE INITIATIVE OF DISCUSSING BOTSWANA'S RESOLUTION IN UNSC TELLING KHAMA THAT "OUR HEARTS WERE WITH YOU" BUT POINTING TO LIKELY ADVERSE CONSEQUENCE OF A "YES" VOTE FOR HIS MISSION. KHAMA REPORTEDLY DID NOT SAY ANYTHING IN REPLY. RICHARD QUOTED KHAMA AS SAYING THAT "OTHER MORE REMOTE STATES" DID NOT APPRECIATE THE IMPORTANCE OF PRIMIN VORSTER IN RHODESIAN SITUATION. (RICHARD COMMENTED THAT, AT SEVERAL POINTS DURING THE MEETING, KHAMA MADE

CLEAR HIS APPRECIATION OF VORSTER'S VTLE. RICHARD INTER-
JECTED OBSERVATION ABOUT HOW UNHAPPY VORSTER HAD BEEN ABOUT
THE UN VOTE ON LESOTHO.)

7. RICHARD SAID HE AND KHAMA SPENT CONSIDERABLE TIME
DISCUSSING THE QUESTION OF SMITH'S INTENTIONS. RICHARD ADVANCED
HIS VIEW THAT HE DID NOT THINK SMITH WOULD SUCCEED IN GETTING
BISHOP MUZOREWA'S COOPEATION "UNLESS HE OFFERS TO TRANSFER SO
MUCH POWER THAT IT WOULD UPSET SMITH'S FOLLOWERS". ON THE OTHER
HAND, "IF SMITH SOULD TRY TO EXCLUDE THE BISHOP, SMITH WOULD
HAVE TO FIND AN ACCOMMODATION WITH FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS. IN
SUMMARY, RICHARD SAID NEITHER HE NOR KHAMA WERE CERTAIN ABOUT
WHAT SMITH IS TRYING TO DO. RICHARD REFERRED TO THE BISHOP AS A
"POOR POLITICIAN" WHO WOULD NEVERTHELESS GET 80 PER CENT OF A
POPULAR VOTE.

8. RHICARD'S OVERALL COMMENT ON MEETING WAS THAT KHAMA IS
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"FRIGHTENED" BY DECLINE IN PROSPECTS FOR DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION, THAT
HE IS "ANXIOUS" THAT UK AND U.S. NOT ABANDON THEIR CURRENT EFFORTS
AND THAT KHAMA WILL SUPPORT "ANY REASONABLE SOLUTION THAT CAN BE
WORKED OUT". FINALLY, RICHARD SAID HE WAS SORRY ALL PARTIES TO
THE RHODESIAN DISPUTE WERE NOT AS AGREEABLE AND REASONABLE AS
PRESIDENT KHAMA.

9. PARTICIPANTS. FOR THE RECORD, IT WOULD BE NOTED THAT, IN
ADDITION TO PRESIDENT KHAMA, ON THE GOD SIDE WERE VICE PRESIDENT
MASIRE, CABINET SECRETARY STEENKAMP, ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY
TIBONE, AND PRIVATE SECRETARY LEGWAILA. GOB SIDE SAID FONMIN
MOGWE WAS "IN LIBYA ON BUSINESS". RICHARD AND HIS PARTY
WERE ENCOURAGED BY VICE PRESIDENT MASIRE'S PERTIENT QUESTIONS
AND COMMENTS SINCE, IN RICHARD'S VIEW, HE IS OBLIGED BY
PRESIDENT'S STATE OF HEALTH TO ASSUME INCREASING RESPONSIBILITY.
NORLAND

UNQUOTE VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING CHAIRMAN, PERSONAL OPINION, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, CAT-B, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 29-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE020463
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: KHSMITH:MN
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1 IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMIN
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: N770001-0319
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977015/aaaaaocr.tel
Line Count: 157
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5d3071d9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 77 STATE 18231
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3592983
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMBASSADOR RICHARD'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT KHAMA
TAGS: PFOR, PDEV, RH, BC, UK, (KHAMA, SERETSE M), (RICHARD, IVOR)
To: LONDON
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5d3071d9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009